



**ABC**  
Head Start Society

# ANNUAL REPORT 2019/2020

# Inspiring Bright Futures

The past twelve months have been a dynamic time for ABC Head Start. While the need for our service has never been greater, the landscape of the non profit sector has changed dramatically due to new priorities from many funders and cuts in Children's Services funding.

ABC Head Start Society has been engaged in a period of renewal for the past few years and we have begun to see some results of all this hard work. Families continue to receive reliable, personalized support for the priorities they set such as food and housing security, financial literacy and peer support. We remain focused on preparing each child for the world they are growing up in. Whether it is promotion of dual language, executive skills, brain development, positive social & emotional interactions, our staff remain committed to helping each child reach their developmental milestones. This year, we opened our program to more children with a wider range of needs which required our staff to adapt to new strategies and to work intentionally as cohesive interdisciplinary teams. Thank you to each staff member for their commitment and resilience.

We created two new sites to serve families closer to where they live. We invested in our staff with additional training, human resource development, technical support and by hiring behaviour specialists, developmental special need assistants and speech and language assistants.

ABC entered new partnerships which reinforce our commitment to efficiency, cost savings and collaboration. Our Management Team and Board members have been very active in creating new partnerships with local businesses, sponsors, and donors.

Our commitment is to expand the infant mental health supports we offer, provide new & innovative programming for all families, and direct our fundraising efforts towards supporting low income and vulnerable children across the region. Even when COVID-19 forced our sites to close, within a week we were able to offer home based learning and resources to all of our families along with virtual support groups.

Thanks to our donors, funders, sponsors, volunteers and staff for their support. I want to particularly recognize the work of our busy Board of Directors for their commitment and resolve.

Sincerely,

Walter J. Lidster  
Executive Director

## Board of Directors

- Scott Cuthbert, Board Chair
- Aileen Campbell, Treasurer
- Chase Moreira, Vice-Chair
- Chaylene Gallagher, Secretary
- Tibetha Kemble, Director
- Rita Melo, Director
- Michelle Plaizier, Director
- Jasmine Monaghan, Director
- Ajit Saley, Director
- Johana Zuluaga, Director
- Adebayo Oyeniyi, Director
- Wendy Gnenz, Director

For more information please  
email: [volunteer@abcheadstart.org](mailto:volunteer@abcheadstart.org)

We respectfully acknowledge that ABC Head Start Society operates within Treaty 6 Territory, the traditional gathering place of diverse Indigenous Peoples, and the homeland of the Métis Nation; whose contributions continue to enrich the fabric of our society. We recognize our role in creating a just and prosperous future for every child.

## A Fresh New Look In Honour of 35 Years

As you may have noticed, we have recently created a new look for ABC Head Start Society in honour of our 35th year of supporting children and families. This new look signifies and demonstrates the growth of ABC Head Start as a society. We also updated our website, making it easier to navigate.

Updating the ABC Head Start Society brand was a carefully planned endeavour. Our goal was to create a new fresh professional look, and embody a clean, and approachable aesthetic. We wanted the brand to reflect the welcoming and safe space that is the physical and emotional embodiment of ABC Head Start Society; and of course create a brand that is comfortable and approachable for parents and children.

Check out our brand new website [www.abcheadstart.org](http://www.abcheadstart.org) and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [YouTube](#) to watch our brand evolve.

The logo for ABC Head Start Society is a dark blue circle containing the letters "ABC" in a large, bold, white sans-serif font. Below "ABC", the words "Head Start Society" are written in a smaller, white sans-serif font.

**ABC**  
Head Start Society



# Learning in Isolation

This year brought unexpected challenges for everyone, including a mandated closure that shuttered our programs from March to June 2020. Recognizing that our families were in a particularly vulnerable position, ABC Head Start Society reacted quickly to support the needs of families remotely. We redesigned early learning to support family-led instruction in the home with constant support from specialists. We created online, virtual, support groups for parents, which allowed them to discuss their anxieties and fears. We distributed tablets to families who needed technology to stay connected, and we introduced a network of volunteers who delivered food and play supplies to families in need. Our children and families were able to participate in continuous learning until the end of their program year, and parents and caregivers expressed that capacity was built within their families as they learned new ways to engage with their children through mentorship from our team.



One of the top needs identified by families was food security. ABC Head Start Society staff knew they had to act and had to act quickly. We reached out to Edmonton Community Foundation, relaying the urgent needs being identified. They responded immediately with nearly \$20,000 of funding through the Rapid Response Fund, funded by the Government of Canada, to be used for emergency food and transportation for families. This allowed us to mobilize quickly. We were able to deploy volunteers to drop off the food and supplies to families. Then our Family Engagement Team was able to connect families to food resources to provide sustainable supports for their needs. United Way of Alberta Capital Region also responded quickly with support from the Government of Canada to provide much needed COVID recovery support groups for families to improve mental health and anxiety.



[Visit Our YouTube Channel to watch "Adapting to COVID."](#)

## What We Achieved From March to June...

21,966

ONE-ON-ONE VIRTUAL  
SESSIONS WITH CHILDREN



333

PEOPLE RECEIVED  
FOOD DELIVERIES



2,162

DOORSTEP DELIVERIES OF  
LEARNING ACTIVITIES & SUPPLIES



2,439

PARENT CHECK-INS  
WITH SPECIALISTS



---

**"I learned how to teach my child, I discovered the weak and strong points of my child, without the materials delivered I did not know how to help my daughter."**

**ABC Parent**

---

# Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

ABC Head Start Society is committed to creating safe spaces where Indigenous, Black, and other people of colour lead, build, and thrive in the community. In 2019 we introduced a diverse committee of ABC Head Start employees to lead this vision. Funded by the Government of Alberta's Anti-Racism grant, we developed and delivered the Generations of Cross-Cultural Learning project to support positive intercultural relationships across generations. We provide a wide range of training to every one of our employees on bias awareness, Indigenous culture and history, and other specialized topics that support ethical and equitable service delivery and workplace culture.

Measured through our annual employee survey, we were able to target and reduce the instances of discrimination in our workplace from 6.5% in 2018 to 1.4% in 2019. Clearly, there is still work to do, and we are taking committed, tangible action to ensure that ABC is an agency where all people are welcomed and respected. For the 2020-21 program year, ABC is in a relationship with Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society and their Practise as Ceremony team. This partnership is helping us build capacity for culturally responsive programming by bringing Indigenous cultural teachings and ceremony to the people working and learning in our programs.



## Who Makes up ABC's Interdisciplinary Teams?

Early Childhood Educators

Developmental Special Needs Assistants

Community Engagement Workers

Certified Teachers

Speech Language Pathologists

Speech Language Assistants

Occupational Therapists

Home Educators

Family Engagement Workers

Behaviour Specialists



---

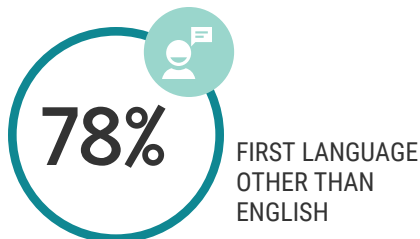
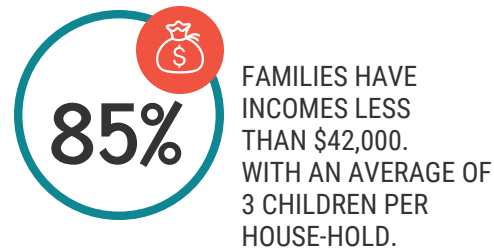
Following our 2019 anti-racism program, 100% of participants reported "My child and I are now more comfortable interacting with people from different generations and cultures."

---





# Year At A Glance...



## ABC Parents...



TOP 6 LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH: Arabic, Somali, Punjabi, Urdu, Oromo, Tigrigna

ABC Head Start Society is a registered charity which has been committed to promoting and supporting strong children, families, and communities in the Greater Edmonton area for over 35 years.

# My Preschool Toolbox



The pandemic brought a lot of interesting challenges and needs. An immediate need identified by staff and parents, was getting developmentally appropriate tools and materials to ABC Head Start Family's homes. This included fundamental learning and exploration items such as books, crayons, markers, paper, glue sticks, paints, scissors, bubbles, stickers, chalk, etc. Though these tools are simple, they are crucial to helping children develop dexterity and creativity while learning through problem solving, fine motor and listening skills.

Once this need was identified, we reached out on social media and directly to our supporters to raise the funds and the My Preschool Toolbox campaign was born. For the month of May, we reached out to the community for support. Knowing that times were tough for everyone, we were unsure of the response. But as always, our supporters came through with donations to the campaign. Oodle Noodle did a week-long fundraiser to support the project. The CST Inspired Minds Learning Project also supported the campaign which meant we were able to raise over \$17,000 and buy supplies for 500 Preschool Toolboxes.

The Müve team, an Edmonton based Real Estate Team, provided a team of volunteers and assembled all 500 boxes in 4 short hours! A total of 34 community volunteers ranging from ABC Head Start Society board members, past staff, university, and college students, and supporters delivered the Preschool Toolboxes, across the City of Edmonton and Metro Area, right to the family's doorsteps.



**My Preschool Toolbox Campaign will continue.**  
To donate visit [abcheadstart.org/donate](https://abcheadstart.org/donate).



**"Thank you & ABC Headstart [sic] for everything you've done for us during these uncertain times. We really appreciate it & are so thankful to have access to all of these resources..."**

**- ABC Parent**



# Thank you to our supporters

Adebayo Oyeniyi  
Angelika Koops  
Anne McClintock  
Annemarie Locher  
ATCO Energy Ltd.  
ATCO EPIC  
Audry Willmeier  
Beta Sigma Phi - Edmonton  
Blush Lane Organic Produce  
Bonnie Powers  
Brent Collingwood  
Brice & Lorna Stephenson  
Bruce MacGregor  
Butler Family Foundation  
CanadaHelps Partner Giving Program  
Capital Estate Planning Corporation  
Carmen Nishiyama  
Carol & Ronald Bablitz  
Carolyn Melnychuk  
Chantel Molzan  
Christina Vignal  
Christine Beveridge  
Christine Pratt  
Cindy Schuster  
City of Champions Lions Club  
CN Employees & Pensioners  
Cory Janssen  
Cristina Figueiredo  
Curtis & Debbie Lein  
Cyntial Soneff  
DanceCo Ltd.  
Dean Rawson  
Deanna Hagen  
Debra Wooding  
Diane Sinclair  
Donald Sprague  
Donna McGuire  
Douglas & Wendy Elkow  
Edmonton Community Foundation  
Edmonton Millwoods Lions Club  
Elaine Friedrich  
Elizabeth Grieve  
Elizabeth Morin  
EPCOR  
Ernie Roberge  
First Book Canada  
Fredrick Shindruk  
Germaine Chau  
Gordon Buck  
Grant Vogel

Greg Locher  
Gwendolyn Gray  
Heather Kennedy-Plant  
Helen McLean  
Home Depot  
Ingrid Schifer  
Institute for Cross Cultural Exchange  
J & J Group LLP  
J.G. Greenough  
Jacqueline & Peter Salmon  
Jacqueline Carroll  
Jaimie Baron  
James Boyes  
James Drinkwater  
Jammy Jorza  
Janice Agrios  
Jen McEwen  
Jen Wrobel  
Jessica Sadownyk  
Jillian Dal Bello  
Joan McCann  
Joanna Bates  
Joe Ammar  
John & Dianne Storey Family Foundation  
John & Helen Hope  
John Ferguson  
Jonathan Tantas  
Joyce Purdy  
Judy Meintzer  
Jumpstart  
Kara Jensen  
Karen Young  
Karrie's Kostumes  
Kathleen Carry  
Kathryn Aleong  
Kelly Michetti  
Kenton & Tanya Lein  
Kerry Crawford  
Kevin Biggar  
Kevin Hlga  
Lama El-Kassem  
Lea Storry  
Leanne Jodoin  
Lisa Gill  
M. Blakewell  
Mark Beveridge  
Marlene Osaka  
Matt Kingston  
Maureen McDannold  
Maureen Parker

Melissa Morin  
MHK Insurance  
Michael Seneka  
Michelle Mol  
Midwest Property Management / Gold Bar  
Developments  
Nadine Kern  
Nelson Tonn  
Nicholas Coe  
Nicole Bedard  
Northbridge Insurance  
Oncore Medi-Spa  
One World Montessori School  
Oodle Noodle  
Palix Foundation  
Pat Kehdy  
Paula Holt  
Paypal Giving Fund Canada  
Phillippe Harousseau  
Quesnell Management Ltd.  
Rachel Baldock  
Rafael Figueiredo  
Ralph & Gail Young  
Raywalt Construction  
Rene Chiasson  
Rio Terrace Moravian Community Church  
Robert Proznik  
Robertson-Wesley United Church  
Rochelle Wilson  
Rolanda Patton  
Royal Alex Hospital - ECDF  
Ruth Schwab  
Sabine Gromnisky  
Sandra Barnes  
Scott Cuthbert  
Shad Smereka  
Shant Chakmakian  
Shawna Vogel  
Shores Jardine LLP  
Stanice Markham  
Sue Ashby  
Sunshine Pawchuk  
Susan & John Hokanson  
Tamara Parris  
Tamena Powers  
The CST Learning Project  
The Ranch Golf & Country Club  
Timothy Swanson  
Trevor MacDonald  
Vedran Skopac  
Wendy Bryan  
Wendy Gnenz  
William Elzinga  
Willowridge Construction  
Yanina Sokolowski  
Zul Bharwahi...and many more.

## 3 Ways to GIVE

1

Make a donation online at  
[abcheadstart.org/donate](https://abcheadstart.org/donate)

2

Mail a donation to  
12122 68 St. NW  
Edmonton, AB  
T5B 1R1

3

Provide goods & services  
[giving@abcheadstart.org](mailto:giving@abcheadstart.org)

ABC Head Start Society is a registered charity which relies on the generosity of the community to be responsive to the needs of the children and families we serve. Please consider becoming a supporter today.

2019 - 2020

# FUNDS

## RECEIVED & DISBURSED

---

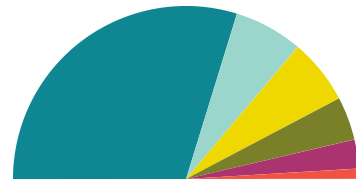
FUNDS  
RECEIVED



TOTAL: \$8,125,013

● Alberta Education    ● City of Edmonton FCSS  
● Children's Services    ● Grants    ● Donations & Fundraising  
● Public Health of Canada    ● Service Fees    ● Other Revenue

FUNDS  
DISBURSED



TOTAL: \$7,988,770

● Staffing    ● Program Costs, Supplies, Equipment  
● Investments in Reserves    ● Rent & Building Maintenance  
● Client Transportation    ● Investment in Capital Assets

\*A complete set of audited Financial Statements are available upon request.

\*\*A portion of the current year's surplus has been restricted by the Board of Directors for future projects.

## ABC Head Start Society

Inspiring Bright Futures

Central office:

Jerry Forbes Centre for Community Spirit

12122 68 St. NW

Edmonton, AB

T5B 1R1

Charitable No: 137044962RR0001



780.461.5353



[www.abcheadstart.org](http://www.abcheadstart.org)



[info@abcheadstart.org](mailto:info@abcheadstart.org)



[@abcheadstart](https://www.instagram.com/abcheadstart)



[facebook.com/abcheadstart](https://facebook.com/abcheadstart)

